

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-07 /086 W

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P R 171115Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9930

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 3019

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CG, AO, NI

SUBJECT: SHABA DEVELOPMENTS: NIGERIAN REACTION

REF: STATE 56060

1. FMG HAS ISSUED NO STATEMENT ON DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHERN ZAIRE. NO EDITORIAL COMMENT AND ONLY VERY BRIEF MENTION ON NEWS PAGES. BELIEVE PAUCITY OF COMMENT IS RESULT OF FMG LACK OF CONCRETE INFORMATION. DEPUTY DIRECTOR MEA AFRICA DEPARTMENT TOLD POLCOUNS MARCH 16 MEA HAD NOT YET RECEIVED MANY REPORTS ON SHABA SITUATION.

2. DESPITE CONTINUING NIGERIAN SUPPORT FOR NETO'S MPLA GOVERNMENT IN ANGOLA, A LATENT DISLIKE OF MOBUTU AND ZAIRIAN SUPPORT FOR ANGOLAN DISSIDENTS, WE BELIEVE FMG WILL LIKELY
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ATTEMPT TO AVOID TAKING SIDES. NIGERIA HAS ANNOUNCED INTENTION OF NORMALIZING AND IMPROVING BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH ZAIRE; IT OPPOSES FOREIGN INTERVENTION AND/OR SECESSIONIST MOVEMENTS; AND IS SOMEWHAT DISILLUSIONED WITH NETO'S CONTINUED DEPENDENCE ON CUBAN PRESENCE TO DEAL WITH CIVIL STRIFE. GIVEN FMG'S PENCHANT FOR VOLUNTEERING ITS SERVICES, FMG MIGHT POSSIBLY OFFER TO MEDIATE. ITS CREDENTIALS WOULD SEEM GOOD: --EARLY

TIES WITH AND SUPPORT FOR NETO AND ITS AVOWED INTENTION TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH MOBUTU.

3. BEING BASICALLY PRAGMATIC, HOWEVER, NIGERIANS WILL LIKELY AWAIT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND INDICATION OF WHAT WAY THE WINDS ARE BLOWING BEFORE MAKING AN OFFICIAL, PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENT. SHOULD ISSUE EVENTUALLY NARROW DOWN TO SECESSION, FMG CAN BE EXPECTED TO COME DOWN HARD IN OPPOSITION TO THOSE FORCES SUPPORTING SECESSIONISTS. SHOULD ISSUE FORCUS ON INTERVENTION AND SHOULD IT BE ESTABLISHED THAT BOTH ZAIRE AND ANGOLA HAVE BEEN GUILTY OF THE INFRACTION, FMG MAY PREFER TO WORK QUIETLY THROUGH OAU. ONE TENTATIVE INDICATOR OF FMG THINKING IN THIS REGARD WAS DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S COMMENT THAT FMG WOULD NOT APPROVE OT THE USE OF "CUBAN OR OTHER FOREIGN" PERSONNEL IN THE ZAIRE FIGHTING.

4. WE WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR PRESS AND UTILIZE OUR CONTACTS IN EFFORT ASCERTAIN TRENDS OF FMG ATTITUDES. AMBASSADOR SANU EXPRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT EVENTS ARE NOT YET OUT OF HAND AND SITUATION CAN BE CONTAINED. NIGERIANS ARE ATTEMPTING TO FOLLOW DEVELOPMENTS, AS INDICATED BY DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S QUESTION WHETHER USG WAS RESPONDING TO ZAIRIAN REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE. WE CONFIRMED THAT U.S. HAD SENT MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND OTHER EQUIPMENT TO KINSHASA. GIVEN NIGERIAN (AND AFRICAN) SUSPICION OF WESTERN INFUSION OF MILITARY SUPPLIES INTO AFRICA, IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO CONSIDER KEEPING FMG INFORMED OF OUR ACTIONS IN THIS REGARD.

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